

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-07

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R 120925Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1542

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 4220

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, XR

SUBJ: GULF SECURITY PACT

REF : TEHRAN 5460

SUMMARY: SAUDI ARABIA HAS IN PAST YEAR BEGUN TO PLAY MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN GULF AFFAIRS, AND SEEKS GOOD COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WITH MAJOR GULF POWERS. IT DOES NOT, HOWEVER, PERCEIVE A VACUUM ON ARAB SIDE OF THE GULF, AND -- RE A GULF SECURITY PACT -- WE DOUBT IF SAG WOULD BE INTERESTED IN LEGITIMIZING A SECURITY ROLE FOR OTHERS IN AN AREA IT REGARDED AS ITS OWN PRESERVE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE AMBASSADOR EXPECTS TO SEE CROWN PRINCE FAHD SOON

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AFTER HIS RETURN FROM HIS CURRENT VISIT TO KUWAIT AND

IRAQ AND WILL ATTEMPT TO ELICIT FROM HIM AT THAT TIME HIS VIEWS ON COOPERATIVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE GULF. IN THE MEANTIME, WE NOTE, THAT TALK OF A GULF SECURITY PACT HAS NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN EMANATING FROM SAUDI ARABIA. MOREOVER, SUCH AN AGREEMENT INVOLVING IRAN, IRAQ AND SAUDI ARABIA WOULD CONSTITUTE A MAJOR DEPARTURE IN SAUDI FOREIGN POLICY IF IT WERE TO GO BEYOND A SIMPLE DECLARATION OF THE INTENTION OF THE GULF STATES TO HANDLE THEIR OWN SECURITY AFFAIRS WITHOUT OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE.

2. BEFORE THE DEATH OF KING FAISAL, SAUDI ARABIA HAD BEGUN TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE AND IMAGINATIVE ROLE IN THE GULF, FOR INSTANCE SETTling THE LONG-STANDING BORDER DISPUTE WITH ABU DHABI AND EASING OF RELATIONS WITH IRAQ. THE HAND OF PRINCE FAHD WAS EVIDENT IN THESE DEVELOPMENTS. SINCE FAISAL'S DEATH WE HAVE NOTED A TENDENCY TOWARD GREATER ACTIVISM IN FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS IN GENERAL. THERE ARE REFLECTIONS OF THIS IN SAUDI GULF POLICY, SUCH AS IN THE ACCELERATED WARMING OF RELATIONS WITH KUWAIT EXEMPLIFIED BY FAHD'S VISIT THERE (MASSIVELY PUBLICIZED IN THE SAUDI MEDIA).

3. THE BASIS TENET OF SAUDI GULF POLICY IS THE NEED FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL THE STATES OF THE REGION AND PARTICULARLY THE MAJOR STATES. SAUDI ARABIA WAS EDGING IN THAT DIRECTION IN ANY CASE BUT THE SUDDEN SETTling OF THE IRAN-IRAQ DISPUTE HAS ACTED AS A SPUR TO IMPROVEMENT OF SAUDI RELATIONS WITH IRAQ FOR THE OBVIOUS REASON THAT IRAQ CAN NOW DEVOTE MORE ATTENTION AND RESOURCES TO ITS GULF NEIGHBORS.

4. THE AIM OF THIS GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY HAS BEEN TO CREATE A CLIMATE IN WHICH NON-PENNINSULAR POWERS DO NOT INTERFERE IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE STATES ON THE ARAB SIDE OF THE PERSIAN GULF. SAUDI ARABIA'S LEADERS HAVE CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED THAT THERE IS NO POWER VACUUM ON THE ARAB SIDE OF THE GULF AND THUS NO NEED FOR AN OUTSIDE POWER TO CONCERN ITSELF WITH SECURITY THERE. (THIS STATEMENT IS ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY TRIGGERED BY QUESTIONS ABOUT IRAN'S ROLE IN REGIONAL SECURITY). SAUDI LEADERS HAVE NEVER SPOKE PUBLICLY OF SAUDI HEGEMONY ON THE PENNINSULA SIDE OF THE GULF, BUT IN PRIVATE REMARKS WE CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE HEARD SOMETHING VERY MUCH AKIN TO IT (FROM CROWN PRINCE FAHD AND ESPECIALLY FROM MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN).

5. WE THEREFORE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE SAUDI INTEREST IN A FORMAL PACT WHICH WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF LEGITIMIZING A SECURITY ROLE FOR IRAN AND IRAQ IN AN AREA WHICH THE SAG CONSIDERS ITS OWN PRESERVE. THE SAUDIS MIGHT WELL ASK THEMSELVES WHY A SECURITY PACT IS NECESSARY; AGAINST WHAT COUNTRY

IS IT TO BE DIRECTED? THE SAUDIS TRUST THE SHAH AND HIS GOVERNMENT, BUT THEY HARBOR SOME SUSPICIONS ABOUT PERSIAN CONCEPTIONS OF MANIFEST DESTINY. THEY DO NOT TRUST THE BAATH REGIME IN IRAQ. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE A NON-RIPARIAN POWER POSING A THREAT TO GULF SECURITY.

6. WE THEREFORE CONCLUDE THAT THE SAG WILL TAKE A VERY CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO A GULF SECURITY PACT. IT IS NOT A SAUDI TRAIT TO BE FRANKLY NEGATIVE ABOUT AN IDEA PUT FORWARD BY A FRIENDLY COUNTRY. THEY HAVE, HOWEVER, DEVELOPED FOOT DRAGGING TO A FINE ART.

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